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### **LOCAL DRUG DEALER SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS**

*Sentence is final step in case involving 21 defendants*

SACRAMENTO – United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that KAMALJIT SINGH KHERA, 35, of San Ramon, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Frank C. Damrell, Jr. to 30 years in federal prison for his role in a conspiracy to commit several federal drug offenses including Distribution of Crystal Methamphetamine ("ice"), Distribution of Marijuana, Distribution of Cocaine, Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana, and Possession with Intent to Distribute Crystal Methamphetamine ("ice"). The defendant was found guilty by a jury in March 2005.

This case was the product of an extensive/joint investigation by the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force (a federally funded task force of federal, state and local law enforcement agents), the Internal Revenue Service, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security. United States Attorney Scott stated, "The tremendous success of this long-term investigation is a testament to what can be accomplished when federal and local agencies team together to dismantle large drug organizations."

According to Assistant United States Attorney Anne Pings, who prosecuted the case, the conspiracy, which began in 1998 and continued until 2003, involved the importation of high-potency British Columbia marijuana ("BC Bud"), crystal methamphetamine ("ice"), and Ecstasy from Canada into California. The drugs were supplied to lower-tier sellers and sold locally in Northern California. The evidence at trial was that the Canadian drug traffickers would not accept payment in American dollars, preferring instead to be paid in kilos of cocaine. KHERA'S role was to supply the cocaine used to pay the Canadian suppliers. In sentencing defendant KHERA, Judge Damrell stated that KHERA was the "lynchpin" of the organization who had escaped responsibility for his actions all his life. In imposing the lengthy sentence, the judge told the defendant, "Your luck just ran out."

Defendant KHERA'S co-defendants previously entered pleas of guilty and were sentenced for their roles in the conspiracy as follows: GIAP HUU LIEN, 34, of Tracy, was sentenced to 17 years on January 17, 2005; HIEP HUU LIEN, 31, of Fremont, was sentenced to 9 years on July 12, 2005; DUC KHIEM NGO, 34, of Lathrop, was sentenced to 8 years on January 11, 2005; CHAU MINH DANG, 24, of San Jose, was sentenced to 7 years on January 11, 2005; THOMAS VINH QUACH, 27, of Elk Grove, was sentenced to 5 years on May 31, 2005; MIKE HUU NGUYEN, 32, of San Francisco, 27 months January 24, 2005; and KHOA

DANG TRAN TO, 30, of San Jose, was sentenced to 27 months on October 11, 2005.

Four additional defendants, PHUOC L. NGUYEN, 33, of Seattle, TREVOR HUTCHISON, 35, of Port Townsend, Washington, TROY DALE PLENDL, 44, of Mt. Vernon, Washington, and MICHAEL KIRK CAREY, 38, of Quincy, Washington, previously pleaded guilty in connection with a single transaction involving 48 kilos of cocaine intercepted by law enforcement traveling north on Interstate Highway 5 near Redding after law enforcement officers followed 10 of the those kilos of cocaine from KHERA'S residence. TROY DALE PLENDL, 44, was sentenced to 8 ½ years on June 6, 2005. NGUYEN was sentenced to just over 7 years on June 9, 2005.

A second-tier of defendants was charged with selling the imported drugs locally. They entered pleas of guilty and are currently serving sentences previously imposed by Judge Damrell. They include: DENNIS LE HUYNH, 25, of Sunnyvale, PETER QUOC HUYNH, 31, of San Francisco, TIN PHUNG NGUYEN, 24, of San Jose, JOHN GEORGE MASRI, 31, of Milpitas, JOSHUA PAUL LECHAK, 24, of Fairfield, LAUNTE DURAY BARNES, 27, of Sacramento, and AMY KIM HUYNH, 26, of Elk Grove.

Two additional defendants, LISA NOH, 29, of Tracy, and RICHARD LIEN, of San Jose, previously pleaded guilty and were sentenced for engaging in financial transactions designed to disguise the illegal proceeds of the conspiracy. Law enforcement agencies also seized several homes, a motor home, luxury vehicles, and cash which represented proceeds of the conspiracy.

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